



1 TIMOTHY THE CHURCH & ITS CONFESSION— PART 1

WEEK 11 | 1 TIMOTHY 3:14-16
PASTOR CHARLIE BLOUNT
MAY 19, 2024

Our study of 1 Timothy has been focused on how the church is to function according to God's standards. As we see in today's passage, this is why Paul is writing to Timothy. He wants the church to glorify Christ and fulfill His mission; therefore, there is a proper way for us to function that enables us to do this. So far, we have seen the leadership God has put in place to shepherd and serve the flock: the pastors and deacons. We've seen the importance of holding fast to true, sound doctrine. We have seen how the church should be centered on the good news, the gospel. We have also seen how the church needs to be in constant communion with God personally and corporately, that is, through prayer. As we look at today's passage, we will get a clearer picture of who the church is and the confession we hold concerning Jesus.

Who is the church?

Sadly, Scripture's view of the church is much higher than many professing believers' views. Our modern-day understanding of church is often focused more on a place than a people, a brand than a body, and casual attendance rather than committed belonging. Sadly, there are too many who think they can live as a Christian apart from the body of Christ, a notion that the Bible does not affirm. Others view the church as a place they attend, whether to check off the list of some required religious commitments or to get some form of spiritual advice or encouragement. Few, however, see the church in the light that the Bible describes it. As we look at verse 15, we see three descriptions that help us better understand who the church is and why it is important.

God's Household

Paul first describes the church by referring to us as God's household. This clearly has familial significance. In Christ Jesus, we have been adopted by God into His family. This means that we have been brought together as one big family, united in our confession of Jesus as Savior and Lord and His Spirit, which lives in each of us. Heaven will one day hold a great family reunion of all believers of all time, but until that day, we get a glimpse of it by being part of a local church. Think about the significance of this. The gathered church for the worship of God gives us a small glimpse into eternity as we gather as the sons and daughters of God, redeemed in Christ Jesus, declaring that He is worthy!

We can see this picture in our own families. We are knitted together, living under a roof,

working together through the good and the bad for the betterment of each other. In this spiritual family we are a part of, it is very similar but our working for the good of each other stems from our desire to live for the glory of God. In this, we are living in His grace and goodness, given through Jesus, seeking to please Him with our lives lived in faith. Because God is our Father, and we live in His household, His way is the right way. We live under His direction, obeying His rules, and in doing so, we find that hope and joy are the results for us all. As we live for God, we are also building each other up, just as a healthy family strives to help each other and build one another up. Family life isn't always easy, but it is good. In the same way, we need to see that being part of God's family is a blessing that we should cherish and never take lightly.

The Church of the Living God

There are two parts to this next description that are important, lest we miss out on what God is saying. The "church" literally means "the called-out ones, the assembly, or gathering." If we put these together, we can get a definition that looks like the church is those who are called out in Jesus Christ, who assemble and gather together. This is important because the gathered group of believers constitutes the church. As we assemble, we are the church of the Living God. The phrase, 'The Living God,' is steeped in OT heritage. It often references the dwelling of God's presence. In the OT, the presence of God seems to be located in a place. In both the tabernacle (Exodus 25:8) and the temple (1 Kings 6:13), the presence of God was focused on a location.

Things transition from a location to a people when we get to the NT. We know that in Christ, we have His Spirit, which is His presence with all believers; however, when the church gathers, we demonstrate the presence of God meeting with His people. In Ephesians 2:19, Paul refers again to the church being God's household, later saying that we "are also being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit" (v.22). This is one of the reasons that corporate worship is so important. Gathering together, we experience the presence of God in a special way. At the same time, it also points us to the future time when the universal church will gather in the presence of God and dwell in His presence for all eternity. While we can experience God's presence outside the church, when we gather together, God's presence is special as we meet as His people to worship His name. When the church meets together, united in the Spirit, worshipping through both song and the teaching of God's Word, it is no doubt a time when we feel the presence of the Lord.

The Pillar and Foundation of Truth

The final description we get of the church is that it is a "pillar and foundation of truth." What a picture. The gathered church has a responsibility to preserve, guard, and hold high the truth regarding Jesus and God's Word. Each generation must pass to another a proper orthodoxy and orthopraxy. That is knowing what God says and how to live obedient to it. This means we teach it and esteem it as the authority of our lives that points to Jesus while showing our love and devotion to God through our obedience to it. We must explain and model this for every generation.

Timothy and the church in Ephesus would understand this picture as in Ephesus there was the Temple of Artemis or Diana, which is one of the seven wonders of the world. This large, ornate structure had 100 pillars that supported a large marble roof. Each pillar was over 18 meters (328') tall. The church is how the truth of Christ is preserved and passed on, and we must stay committed to this. We cannot fall victim to trends, politics, culture, pragmatism, feelings, opinions, or creativity. All these things change and pass away. Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "My words will never pass away." We must be committed to the Word.

When we piece these things together, we find that the church is the gathering of the family of God, where His presence resides, and His Word is proclaimed and obeyed. We're not a business, a building, or a brand; we're a people called together in Jesus who are to be together in our fulfillment of Christ's mission.



FIRST MOORE
BAPTIST CHURCH

301 NE 27TH STREET MOORE, OK 73160
VISIT US AT FIRSTMOORE.COM